

(approved February 21, 2003)

**BOARD OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
FULL BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

NOVEMBER 14, 2002

**COUNTRY SUITES BY AYRES
1945 EAST HOLT BOULEVARD
ONTARIO, CA**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Karen Pines, MFT Member, Board Chair
Mark Burdick, LEP Member, Vice Chair
Catherine Kay, Public Member
Peter Manoleas, LCSW Member
Glynis Morrow, Public Member
Jane Nathanson, MFT Member
Roberto Quiroz, Public Member
Howard Stein, Public Member
Susan Ulevitch, LCSW Member

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Sherry Mehl, Executive Officer
Mary-Alice Coleman, Legal Counsel
Julie McAuliffe, Administrative Analyst

GUEST LIST ON FILE

The meeting was called to order at approximately 11:25 a.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Ms. McAuliffe called the roll and a quorum was established.

**2. PRESENTATION FROM THE OFFICE OF EXAMINATION RESOURCES
ON THE PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE CLINICAL SIMULATIONS
CURRENTLY TESTED WITHIN THE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY
THERAPIST WRITTEN EXAMINATION**

Ms. Mehl introduced Tracy Ferrel, Ph.D. and Chief of the Office of Examination Resources (OER). Ms. Ferrel explained the functions of OER and the services provided to the Board. OER is an entity within the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) and provides examination related services to DCA's regulatory boards and bureaus. OER

works with regulatory agencies to establish and maintain quality licensure examinations and standards for minimum competency for licensure.

Successful accomplishment requires the commitment and collaboration of OER staff, Board staff, and licensees. OER provides technical oversight for all phases of examination development, conducts workshops and focus groups, maintains item banks and examination statistics related to item performance, and provides consultation on examination related issues. Board staff coordinates participation of licensees, ensures funding for examination development related activities, maintains active participation and involvement as a team member, and provides expertise regarding the professions. Licensees provide active participation as subject matter experts, provide open dialogue and feedback to the Board and OER, and have a continued commitment to improving their profession.

Ms. Ferrel provided an overview of the legal, professional, and technical standards that are required for examinations. The legal standards include the Federal Uniform Guidelines for Employee Selection Procedures, the Civil Rights Act of 1991, Government Code Section 12944, the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, and the California Business and Professions Code Section 139. The standards that are applied, with the exception of the Business and Professions Code Section 139, are the standards that all examinations must adhere to, regardless of the profession, occupation, or state.

Ms. Ferrel elaborated on Business and Professions Code Section 139. This section requires OER to prepare an annual report which details the methods used to ensure quality examination and examination programs. The intent of the legislation is to establish a schedule for conducting and evaluating examination validation and occupational analysis, ensure adherence to legal and professional standards, and require a review of funding and budgetary practices. Amendments made to this legislation became effective in September 1999 and now additionally require DCA to develop and distribute a policy covering occupational analysis, validation, and examination development as well as requires that DCA compile annual reports from boards, bureaus, and programs and submit this information to legislative, fiscal, policy, and sunset review committees by September 30th of each year. DCA's Policy is used by legislative, fiscal policy, and sunset review committees in their annual review of boards, bureaus, and programs. Furthermore, the intent of the legislation is to ensure that the methods specified by boards, bureaus, and programs for ensuring quality examination programs are consistent with DCA policy. The Board is on record for meeting the standards required by the legislation.

Ms. Ferrel spoke of the cycle involved in examination development. The development begins with an occupational analysis (OA), which is an empirical study of practice whose purpose is to define the profession in terms of actual tasks that new licensees must be able to perform at the time of licensure. Ms. Ferrel indicated that the Marriage and Family Therapist OA was completed in October 2002, the Licensed Educational Psychologist OA began in October 2002, and the Licensed Clinical Social Worker is scheduled to begin in 2003.

The objectives of an OA are to evaluate job tasks and knowledges in major areas of current practice and develop a description of practice. The focus of an OA is to identify the critical competencies new licensees are required to perform safely and competently in order to protect the public and to ensure that the competencies reflect professional situations commonly encountered by entry-level practitioners. The description of practice defines practice in terms of actual activities performed, forms the basis for licensing examinations that are job-related, fair, and legally defensible, and provides a foundation for developing legislation and policies that affect regulation and educational standards.

Once a practice is defined or updated, examination development begins. OA critical information is compiled and a blueprint of the examination is created with the assistance of licensees. Examination development consists of development of new items based on content areas defined in the examination plan, review of the items based on performance in previous examinations and relevancy to current practice, development of the examination from a pool of “the best items” determined by a confirmatory group of Subject Matter Experts, and establishment of a passing score for the written examination based on specific criteria.

Ms. Mehl briefly addressed the special accommodations that are applied to those candidates who need assistance. She indicated that the American with Disabilities Act is followed as well as working closely with the Fair Employment Housing Department. Additionally, she works closely with our Legal Office to ensure candidates receive the access they are allowed.

Ms. Ferrel then spoke about the clinical simulations that are currently being tested within the marriage and family therapist written examination. She indicated that the Board is currently reviewing alternatives in regard to the oral examination as well as continuing to improve the written examination format. She elaborated on the questions used in a professional licensure examination and stated that these questions are formulated to get at deeper levels of cognitive thinking. Steps involved include taking the information known, integrating it, and then applying it to a situation. The multiple-choice questions are formulated to application and analysis so the questions have more options about what the correct answer may be, and within the options there is a delineation of a process. The clinical simulations are currently functioning statistically in a satisfactory manner meaning that they not too difficult or not too easy, and they have found that there is a spread in the response rate. The clinical simulations are also discriminating in a good way. Patterns have shown that the higher scoring candidates are selecting the correct answer and the lower scoring candidates are selecting the incorrect answer. Statistically, the items are performing in the ways in which they are meant to do. OER is beginning to refine their processes in how these clinical simulations are developed and in the future she would like to perform a statistical analysis on the differences of candidates who have passed the oral examination after participating in the clinical simulations. Currently OER is pleased with the results thus far and has received positive feedback from the candidates as well as the licensees involved in the process development.

Mr. Manoleas asked that the Board receive a summary of the full cycle of examination development that included the clinical simulations.

Ms. Ferrel indicated that there are very few candidates who do not answer the clinical simulations. There are various triggers and red flags that have been reviewed and the preliminary results do not indicate that there are problems thus far.

Ms. Ferrel then elaborated on the role of licensees who participate in the Examination Development Workshops. She indicated that their role is to determine if an item reflects the knowledge an entry level practitioner needs to perform the task, if the situations, job duties, or tasks are performed by entry level practitioners, and if the concept is relative to current practice and in accordance with the standards of the profession.

Ms. Ferrel provided the Board with the Validation Report for the Marriage and Family Therapist examinations. Ms. Mehl stated that the results of the Occupational Analysis are now being printed and she will send the Board members a copy.

Mr. Quiroz asked how the occupational analysis addresses the diversity of the state and how that is then integrated into the examinations. Ms. Ferrel explained that, based on the current occupational analysis, the number of content areas has been reduced to eliminate diversity as a specific content area because it was found that diversity is interwoven throughout the examination. This and the weight of law and ethics are the two most significant changes to the examination.

Ms. Pines asked Ms. Ferrel to respond to a public comment received regarding the interpretation that the oral examination is an additional process for licensure so candidates may not be as prepared for the clinical simulations in the written examination. Ms. Ferrel stated this is a common mistake. She indicated that it is important to remember that the candidates are preparing for licensure and they are testing for competency of the profession and not for competency to take an examination. They should not get bogged down by whether the examination is a written or an oral examination and should be prepared to pass either examination.

Ms. Pines stated that the Board is concerned with validity as well as reliability of the examinations.

Ms. Ulevitch complimented Ms. Ferrel by stating she was very impressed by the presentation. Ms. Ferrel stated that it is a pleasure to work with the Board. She then indicated that she uses the Board as a model when beginning a new examination process for other boards or bureaus.

Dr. Burdick stated that if someone had any questions about our examination validity or process, they should contact OER.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:05 p.m.